

A Small Production Site at Polis

W. Caraher and R. Scott Moore

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The site of Polis-Chrysochous (ancient Marion and Arsinoe) was a significant settlement and regional center from the Iron Age to the Medieval period situated in a fertile river valley in northwestern Cyprus. [slide 2] While the history of Marion's destruction and re-founding as Arsinoe in the Hellenistic period is relatively well-known, its later Hellenistic, Roman, and post-Roman history remains comparatively obscure.[slide 3]

In 1983, Professor William A. P. Childs of Princeton University established the Princeton Cyprus Expedition with the support and permission of the Cypriot Department of Antiquities in the modern village of Polis-tis-Chrysochou. [slide 4] Formal excavations began in 1984 in an area designated as E.F2 by the excavators and revealed the remains of the Late Antique South Basilica which we will publish with Amy Papalexandrou this winter in *Hesperia*. [slide 5] In addition to the ongoing work at EF2, excavation was undertaken at two other nearby locales, EG0 and EF1. The smaller of these two areas, EF1, excavated in 1988 and 1989, was the focus of a reinvestigation over the last two summers. [slide 6]

Description of the Site

The site of EF1 sits in a shallow depression on the north slope of hill atop of which stands the modern village of Polis-tis-Chrysochous and at the northern edge of the ancient city. [slide 7] Similar to the site of EF2, the arrangement of these buildings in a depression made it necessary to manage the flow of water around the buildings and also made water available for potential use

as either energy or in industrial processes. Unfortunately, excavations provided only the barest hints for identifying the function of the site. Their work did, however, generate a substantial assemblage of Roman and Late Roman pottery in secondary contexts that contributes to the growing body of known ceramic types and their chronological distribution across the Western part of the island as well as the chronology of the EF1 installation.

Architecture

The site of EF1 consists of two major phases and a series of smaller interventions all dating to the Late Roman period; the architecture at the site appears to date to the 6th and 7th centuries and a burial dated by a lead sealings to the very end of the 7th century or the early 8th century marking the end of major activity in the area.

Late Roman Phase 1 [slide 8]

The initial phase of the building consists of four walls which define a hallway and part of a large room entered through a carefully cut doorjamb and doorway in the hallway's west wall. [slide 9] A second door opened to the north with a similar doorjamb and likely provided access to a large room to the north of hallway. [slide 10] A north-south wall (Wall 9) extended from the hallway to form what appears to have been a large room (Wall 9). A deposit just above bedrock and below a floor surface associated with this wall produced an assemblage of Late Roman pottery that included both domestic wares (cooking pots, utility wares, and tables wares) as well as roof tiles and water pipes.[slide 11]

The north-south wall in Phase 1 wall is approximately .5 m wide and preserved only at the level of a foundation made of rounded river stones. In contrast several courses are preserved

in the walls of the hallway which consist of cut stones presumably reused from earlier buildings nearby. The northern face of the north wall of the hallways is visible and reveals that the blocks are arranged in a rather haphazard way without regard to courses and with smaller stones being used throughout as chinking. The door jamb for the north door and in the hallway is well made. Wear marks are clearly visible on the threshold.

Late Roman Phase 2 [slide 12]

The second phase present in this area consisted of three walls of another large room that disturbed and overran the room in Phase 1. The most significant feature associated with this phase was the construction of three new walls which defined the north (Wall 14), west (Wall 1), and east (Wall 3) walls of the room. [slide 13] There is a threshold with a visible pivot cut in the north wall which is higher than the highest course of the north-south wall of phase 1 and almost a meter higher than the threshold of the north door. [slide 14]

It seems likely that the construction of these walls coincided with the filling in of the west door of Phase 1 as the hallway was interrupted by the north-south wall. Despite this, the walls of the hallway may have continued to be at least partly visible throughout this period. [slide 15] The eastern part of the hallway preserved a surface characterized by chips of limestone and terracotta and was significantly (.70 m) higher than the threshold of the west door. The west part of the hallway also received a fill that was approximately 40 cm higher than the west door threshold.

The Phase 2 walls are built at obviously higher elevation than the Phase 1 walls and using a significantly different technique. The substantial north-south wall appears to follow the course of what may be an earlier wall which projects from the south scarp. This wall is 1.25 m thick and constructed of large cut blocks with a rubble core.

[slide 16] This phase also features a series of covered water channels. The excavation of the drain that runs across the northern part of the site produced an assemblage that is probably slightly later than the subfloor packing associated with the first phase. [slide 17] The latest artifact associated with the construction of this channel is a CRS Meyza K3 rim which dates to 530-680. [slide 18] The channel itself also produced a Byzantine piriform lamp dating to the Late 6th or 7th century. Cypriot Red Slip form 11 and 2 are also present as is the ubiquitous LR1 type amphora. This suggests that the channel ceased to function sometime after the 7th century.

Late Roman Phase 3 [slide 19]

At some point after the building of the room in phase 2, a series of wall thickening and buttresses were added to the structure. [slide 20] The buttress and wall thickening have a similar appearance and consist primarily of rounded river stones. They show little of sign of coursing and only rarely preserve evidence for a coarse grey mortar. The method of thickening and buttressing walls is similar to that present at the South Basilica at EF2.

Final Phase [slide 21]

The final phase of Late Antique activity at the area of EF1 involved the burial of a 25-30 year-old woman. [slide 22] The single grave appears to respect the line of north-south wall from Phase 2. More importantly, the burial includes a lead seal apparently as a grave good. [slide 23] [slide 24] The seal features an eagle with outstretched wings on the obverse and the name of the Stephanos on the reverse that Olga Karagiorgou has dated to the late-7th century on stylistic grounds. While the name Stephanos is not rare, the seal likely belonged to an *illustris* of the name who produced several earlier sealings found on the island. The burial, of course, must be

later than imprinting of the seal. The appearance of seals in burials is rather unusual on Cyprus and suggests that the document upon which this seal was affixed likely had significance for the deceased. Another seal of roughly the same date appears in a later fill that covers the burial after the area's abandonment. The burial itself is a bit unusual in that it is not well oriented and is seemingly the only burial that encroaches on the EF1 area.

The Ceramic Assemblage [slide 25]

The assemblage of pre-Late Roman material at EF1 is scrappy and residual consisting of primarily small sherds in contexts with later material which are largely consistent with the types and quantities of 1st and 2nd century material at EF2.

For Late Antiquity, the chronologically and spatially superimposed construction phases made it challenging to use the artifacts assemblage to provide better chronological control at EF1. The date of the sealing associated with the Phase 4 burial at EF1 and another seal, probably dating a few decades later in the abandonment level covering this burial presents a useful marker for the abandonment of the site. Most of the material from this area appears to be in secondary contexts which ranged from floor packing to leveling fills over bedrock and abandonment levels with few sealed deposits associated with particular modifications to the site. The general character of the assemblages present, then, reflects the timeless routine of recycling waste from the city for various utilitarian purposes.

As a result, the material is both diachronic and functionally diverse presumably representing the range of household, commercial, religious, and industrial activities in the Late Roman city. Contexts from the area produced terracotta pipes, hypocaust tiles, various kinds of industrial debris from ceramic wasters to slag and fragments of vitrified stone. These same

contexts also produced domestic assemblages that included a range of Roman and Late Roman cooking pots, table wares in both local and imported fabrics, and lamps.

The Late Roman assemblage from EF1 includes over 850 artifacts that we organized into 23 types which ranged from specific forms of Cypriot Red Slip pottery to broader and more general categories such as Late Roman cooking ware or otherwise undiagnostic amphora in Late Roman fabrics. The most productive comparison is between the EF1 assemblage and the EF2 assemblage associated with a massive remodeling which produced a substantial quantity of Late Roman material as part of a large rubble fill deposited to the south of the basilica. We have dated this assemblage to after the middle of the 7th century.

[slide 26] The EF1 assemblage appears quite different from the material from the large rubble fill associated with the renovation of the South Basilica. [slide 27] The South Basilica assemblage contains a range of mid to late-7th century forms including a so-called CRS well form (named for the first appearance of this form in a mid-7th century context at Anemurium), Dhiorios cooking pot forms, and LR7 and LR13 amphoras. These forms are absent in the EF1 assemblage suggesting that the walls in this area and their ultimate abandonment might predate the appearance of CRS “well form” material on the island. While CRS “well forms,” are relative rare even at the South Basilica, EF1 also lacked locally produced Dhiorios cooking wares, and the latest in the sequence of LR amphora, LR13 and LR7. [slide 28] EF1 also lacks the latest forms of ARS (e.g. 105 and 106) and there are proportionately fewer examples of CRS8, CRS10, and the latest forms identified by H. Meyza as K3 from the nearly Paphos excavations. The types are absent from both those associated with the late 7th, early 8th century burial and the level covering it.

Since the sealings found associated with the burial and the layers that cover it indicate that EF1 was likely abandoned by the end of the 7th century or the very early 8th century, then most of the assemblage present at the site must predate this time. That the EF1 deposits, even those contemporary or immediately after the burials are strikingly different from the assemblages present in the level associated with second phase of the basilica suggests that the modification of the South Basilica may date later than we have argued. In fact, it seems possible that the modifications to the South Basilica could be as late as the early 8th century which would allow for some time for the more diverse assemblage of Late Antique material to develop.

Conclusion [slide 29]

The function of this installation remains unclear. The presence of slag, wasters, and limestone and terracotta chips at various levels initially led excavators to assume an industrial function for this site, but much of this material is in secondary discard. Terracotta and limestone chips might reflect detritus from making mortar or the trimming of stones to construct the walls associated with Phase 2. The presence of water channels that run through the area may speak more to the distinctive topography of the area at the southern end of a relatively narrow promontory projecting north into the coastal plain than water use at the site. That being said, this location would have been well suited for mills or other installations that rely on water for power.

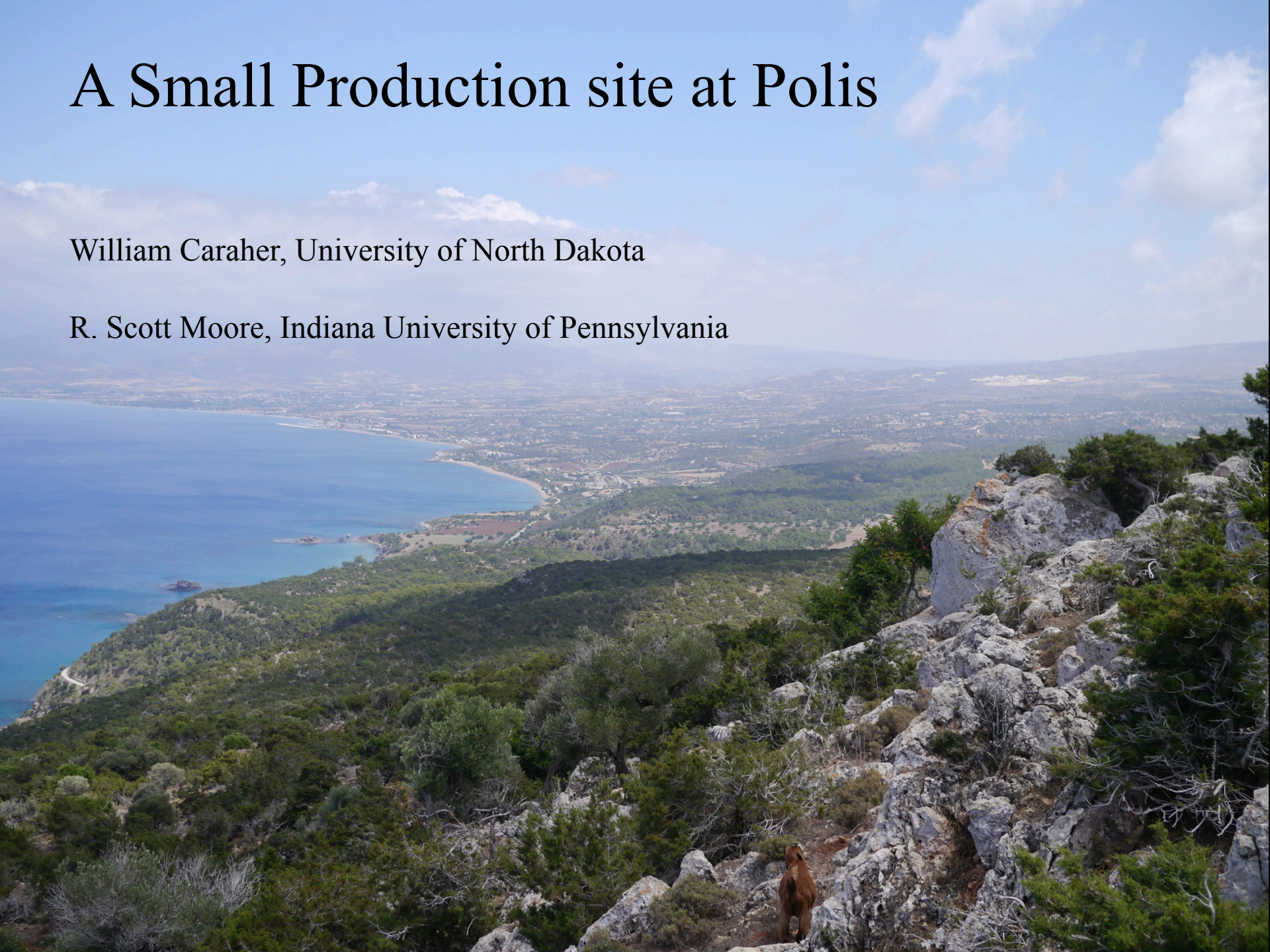
The location of the two superimposed buildings at EF1 outside of the city on the northern slope facing the coastal plain informs their history and features. The presence of water channels through the area demonstrates the ongoing struggle to control the landscape. The nearly continuous modification of the building demonstrates that Polis saw ongoing investment throughout the 6th and 7th century and provides additional evidence for those seeking to

complicate the picture of economic and material decline across the island in the 7th century. The repair of the building during the second phase at EF1 and their ongoing maintenance evokes similar, but probably later repairs at the nearby South Basilica which also saw the addition of buttresses and wall thickening. The absence of certain late-7th century artifacts in the assemblage associated with the final phases of activity at EF1 suggests that the repairs to the second phase of EF1 occurred slightly earlier than those at the South Basilica. The appearance of a burial in the area in the late 7th or early 8th century and the subsequent abandonment of the buildings coincides with the encroachment of burials at both the South Basilica and the church at EG0 and marks the start of a new phase of activity in the northern area of the city. [slide 30]

A Small Production site at Polis

William Caraher, University of North Dakota

R. Scott Moore, Indiana University of Pennsylvania





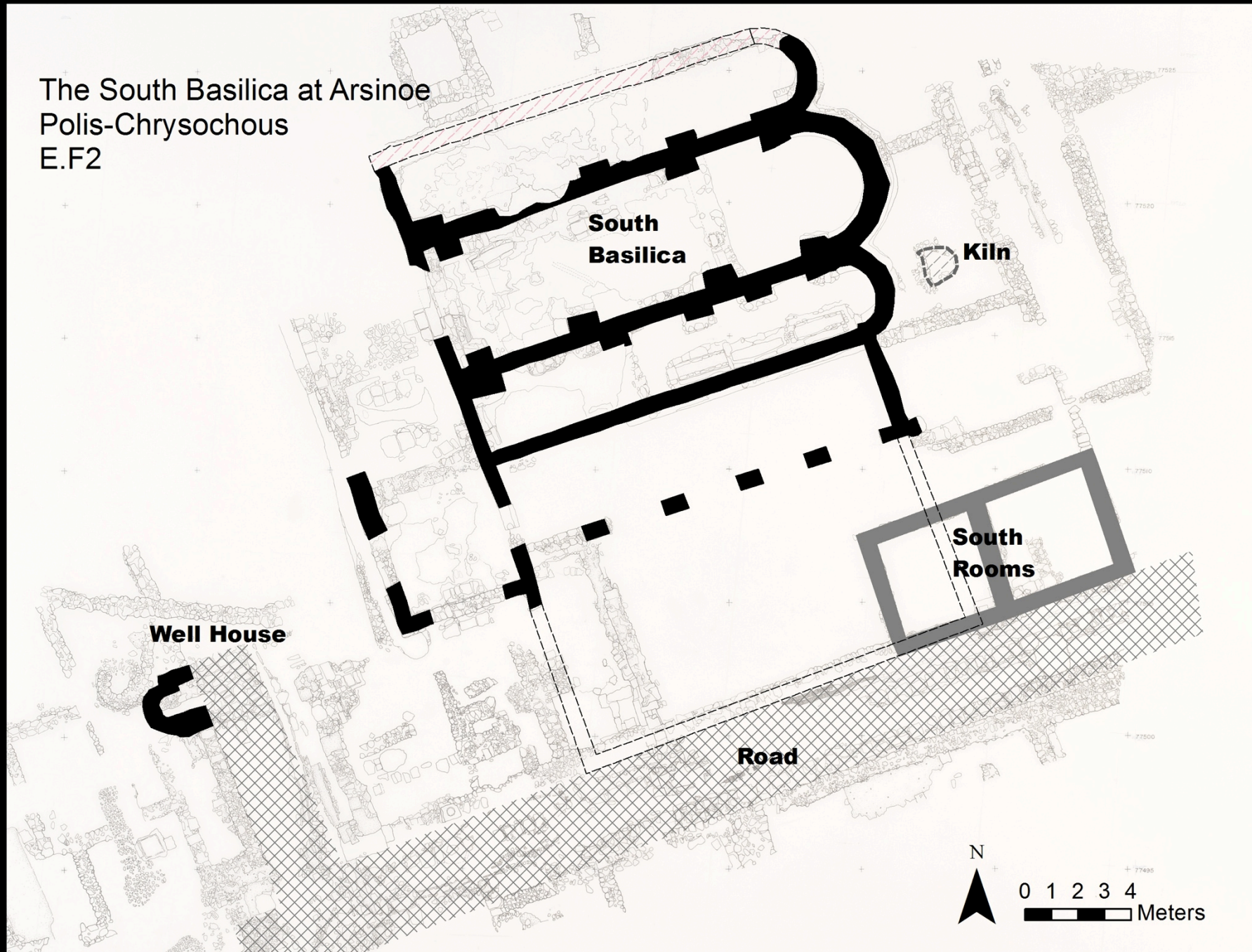
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Image courtesy of NASA © 2013 Microsoft Corporation

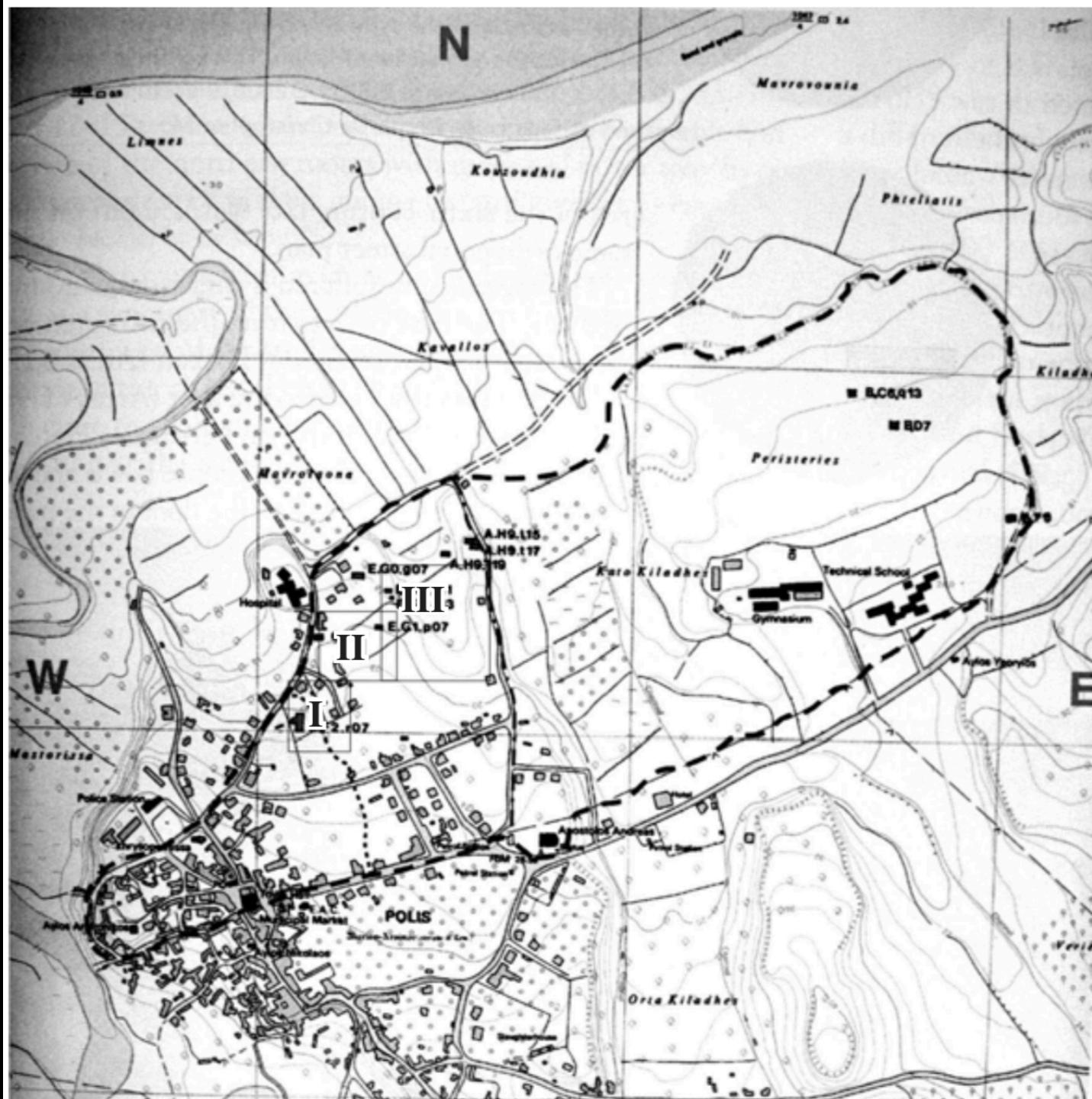




The South Basilica at Arsinoe
Polis-Chrysochous
E.F2

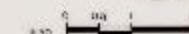








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13 MARCH 1991



TRENCH E



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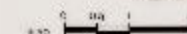
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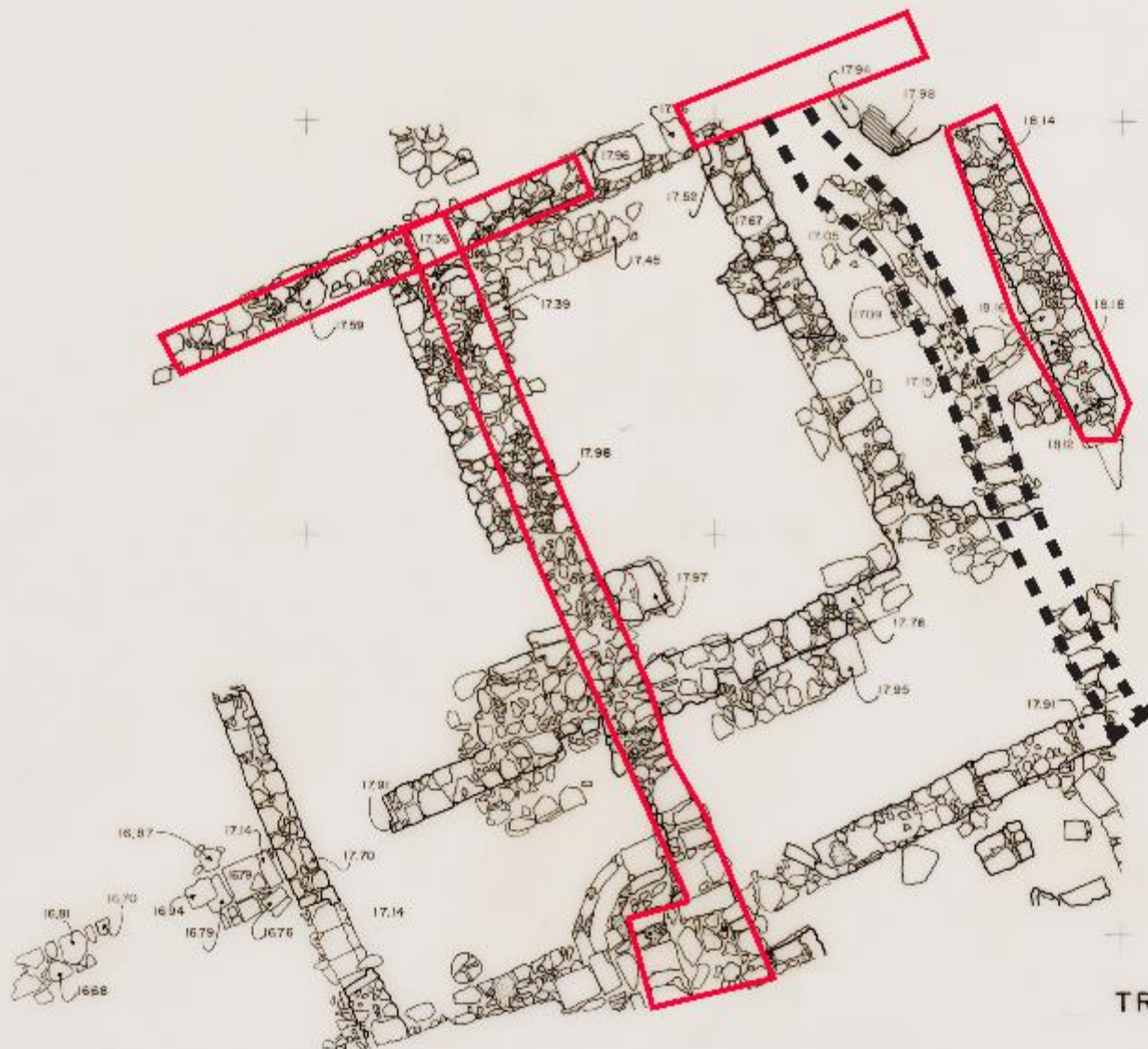
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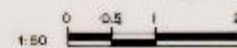








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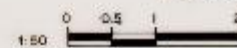
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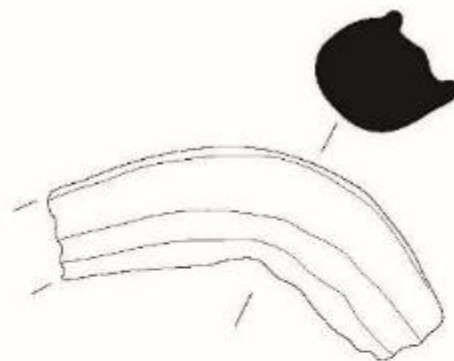
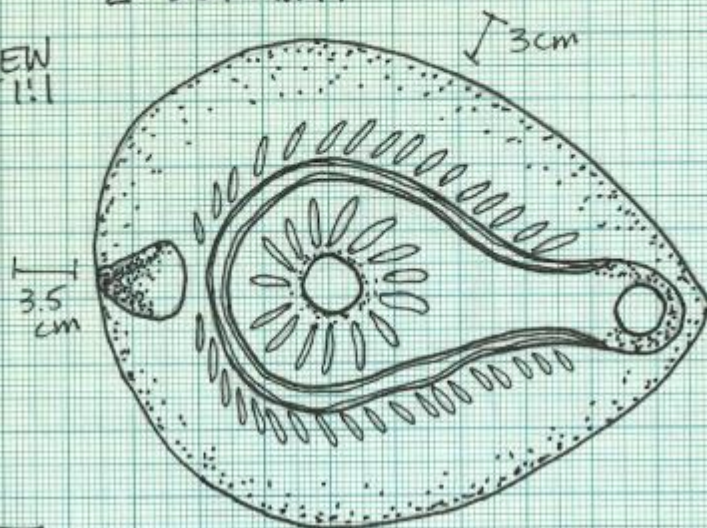
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TOP VIEW
SCALE 1:1



18.5 - LR1 Handle Form B3
(EF2.r06 1991 5,1.14) at scale 1:2



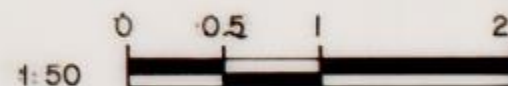
18.6 LR1 Handle Form B3
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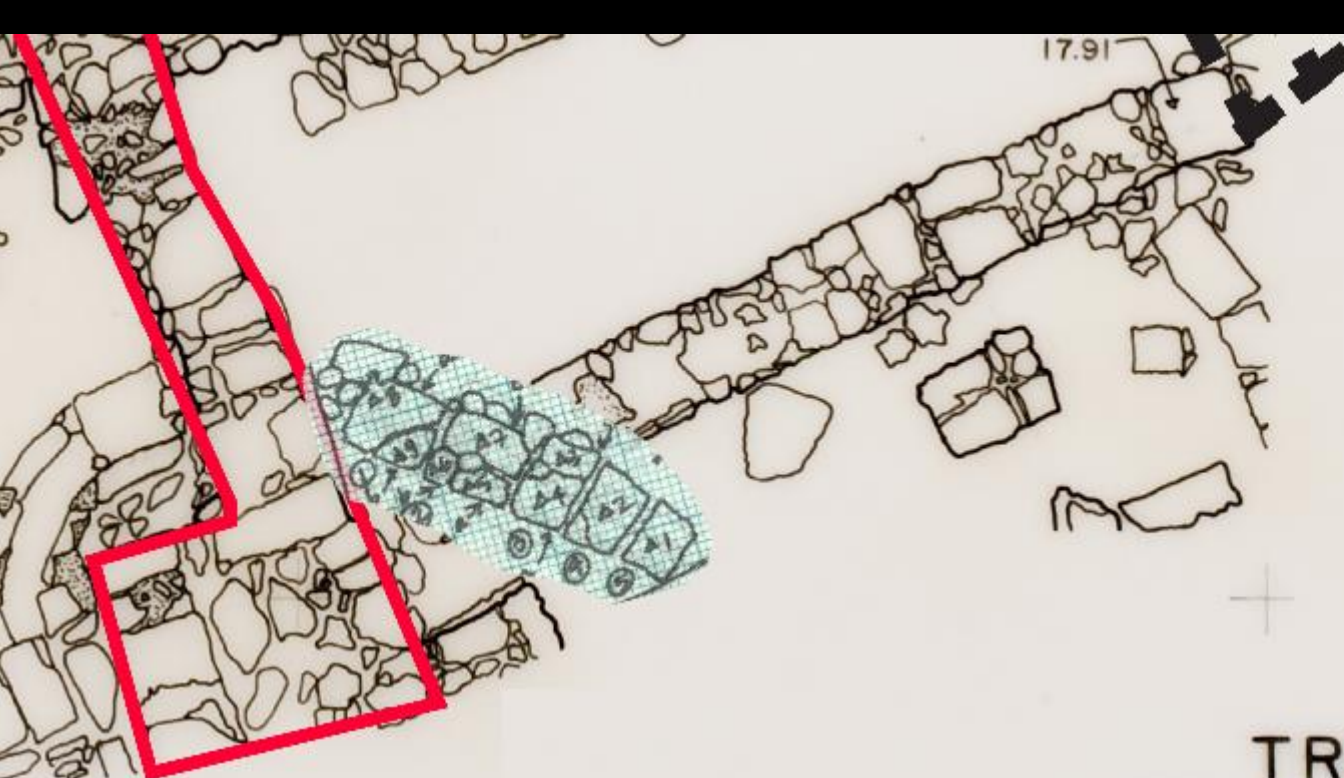
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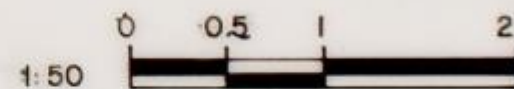
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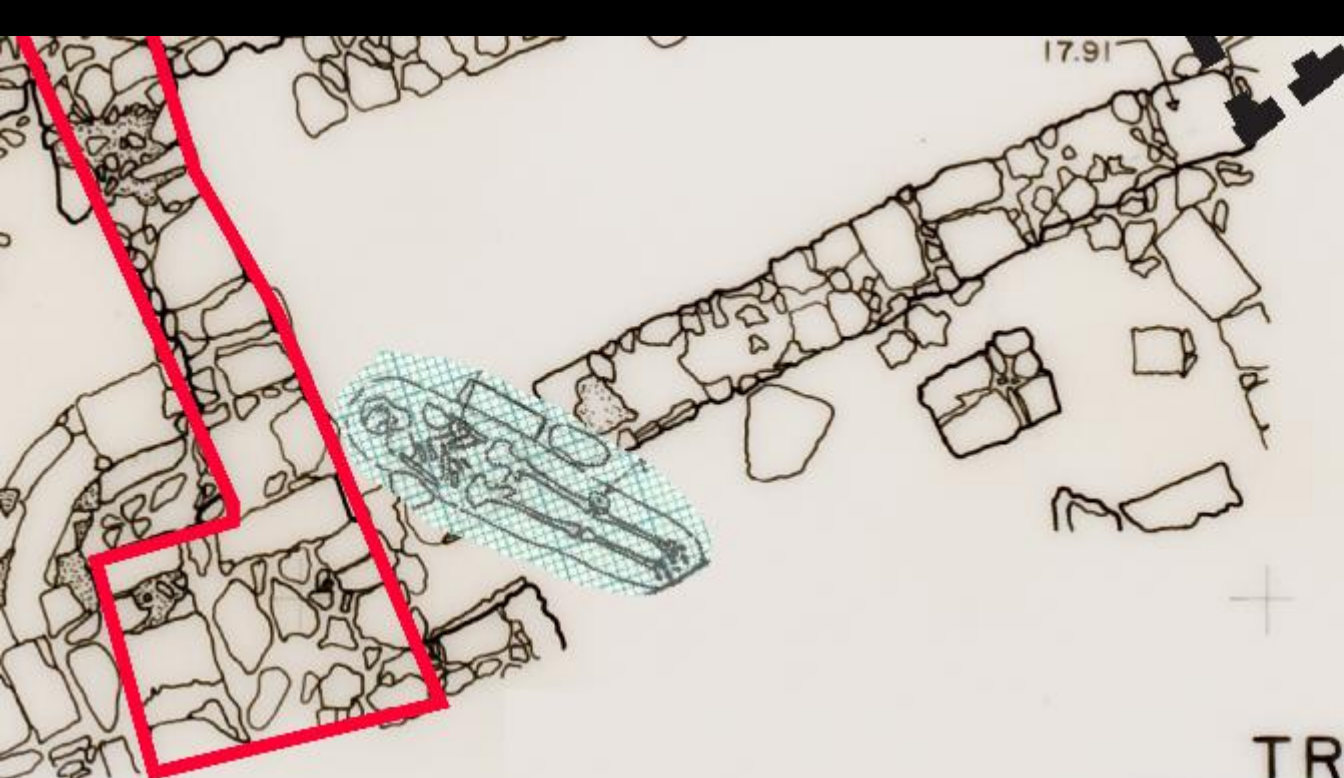
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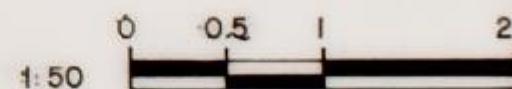
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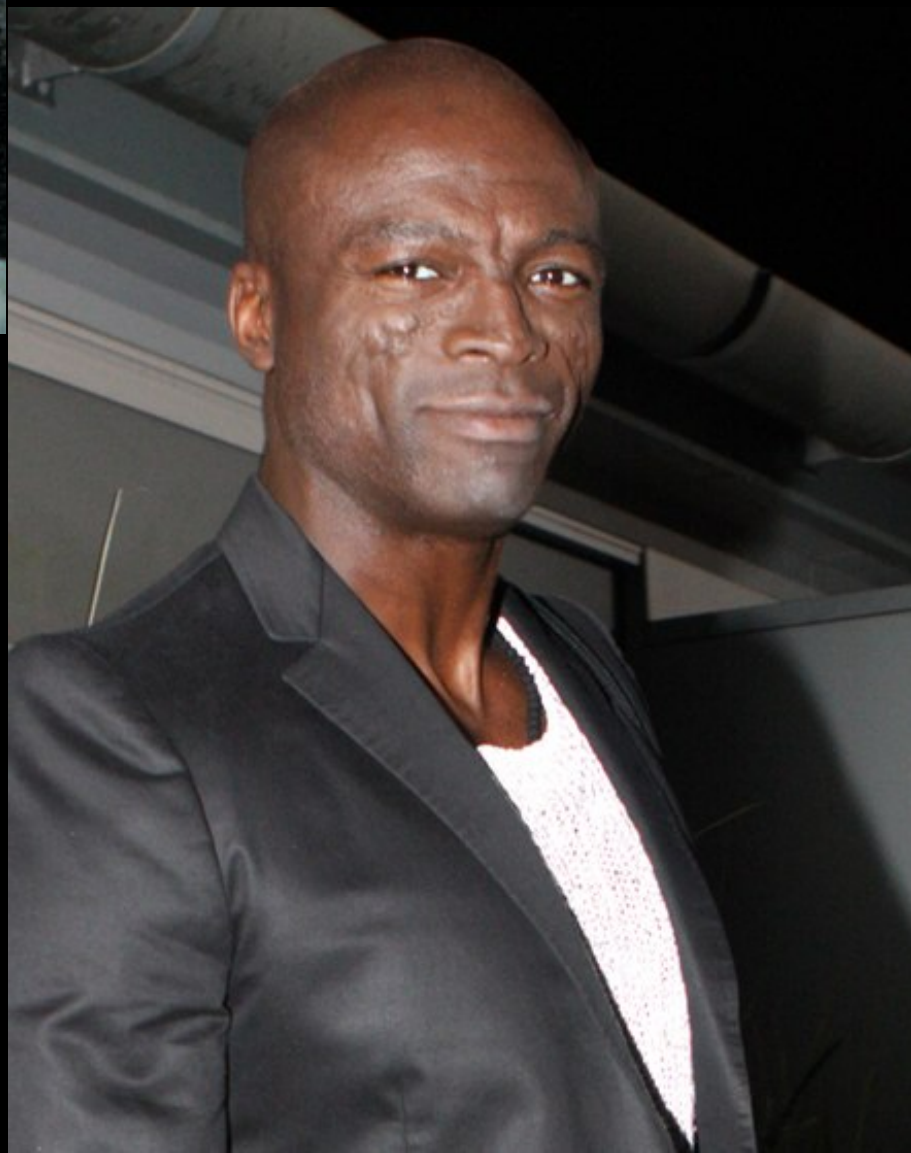
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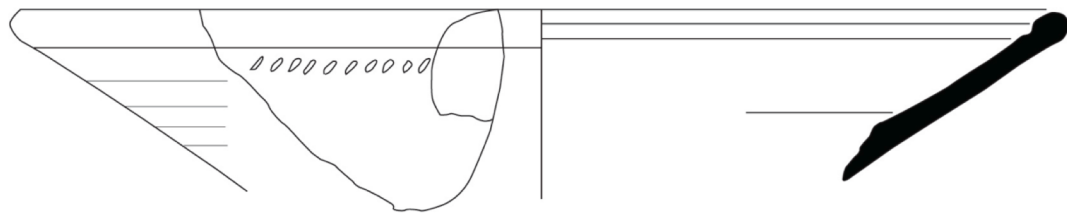


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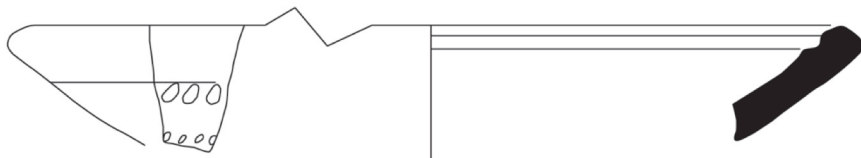






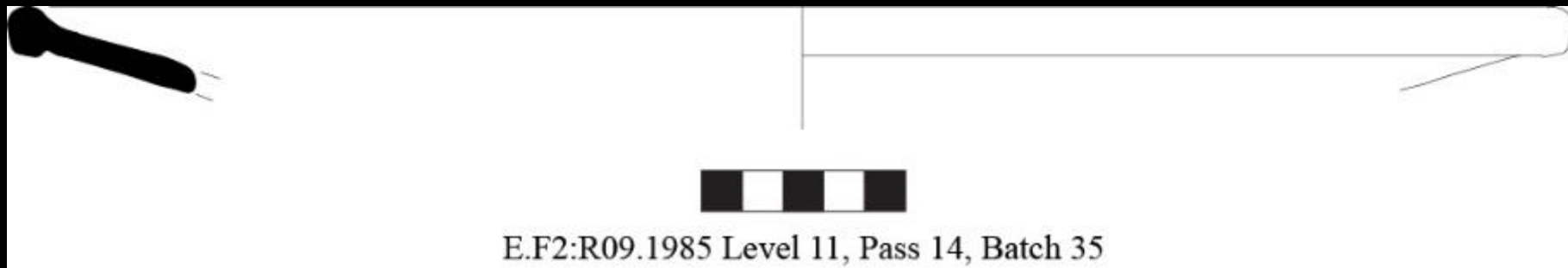


A. Cypriot Red Slip "Well Form"

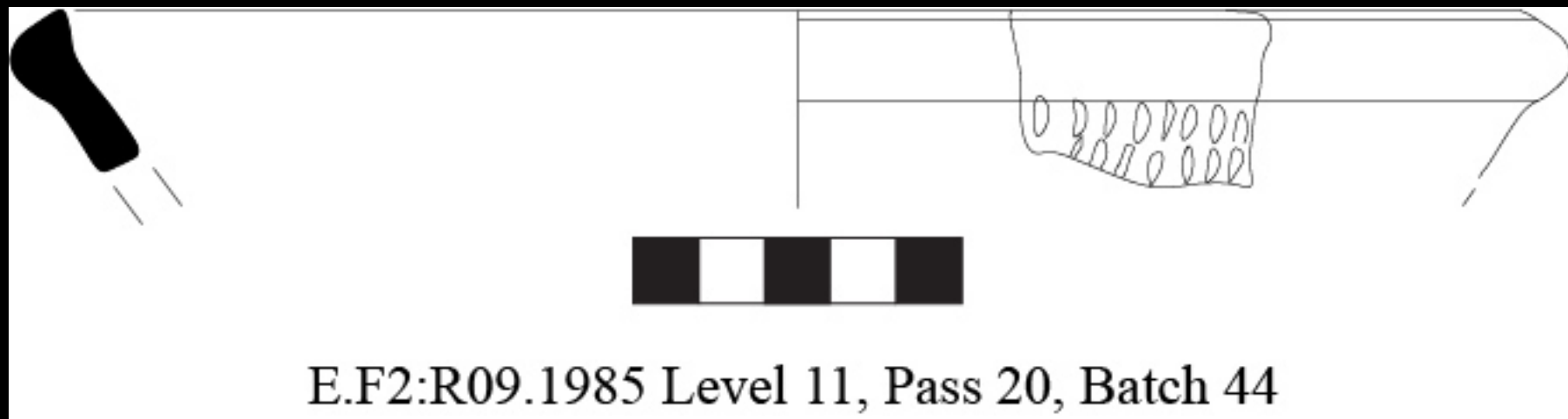


B. Cypriot Red Slip "Well Form"





ARS 105



Meyza K3



